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AUTHOR Rinehart, P. Mann; Borowsky, I.; Stolz, A.; Latts, E.; Cart, C. U.; Brindis, C. D.

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ABSTRACT

This monograph summarizes what is known about youth and violence, identifying 10 myths that confound people's understanding of the real causes of youth violence. It focuses on: what contributes to youth violence (e.g., children exposed to domestic violence are at risk of using violence, children and adolescents use guns when they are easily accessible, and exposure to violence on television affects child and adolescent behavior); statistics on violence (e.g., violence in the community and community deterioration contribute to youth violence, using substances increases the risk of violent youth behavior, and society's acceptance of guns); what protects children and youth from violence (e.g., children need connections with families, schools, and friends; children need to learn how to resolve conflict nonviolently through example, children need a safe, supportive place to go after school, and children need a healthy home environment); descriptions of school and community violence prevention programs; influences on responses to violence (e.g., boys often exhibit more overt behavioral problems after exposure to violence than girls, children are more affected if the perpetrator or victim is known to them, and chronic exposure is psychologically more harmful than a single exposure). A list of related resources and their contact information is provided. (Contains 61 references.) (SM)

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YOUTH Violence:

Lessons From the Experts

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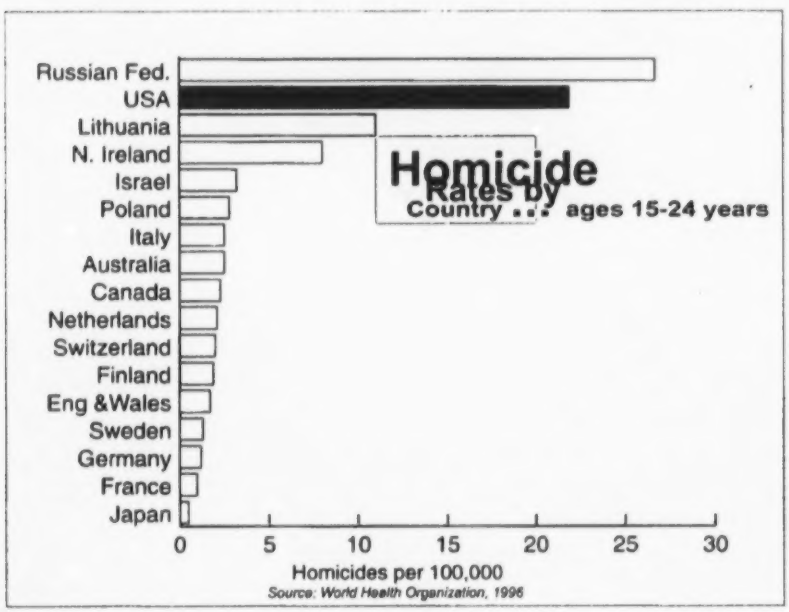
Introduction

There's no shortage of violence in our lives. Maybe it's another headline: "Youth kill two in act of random violence."

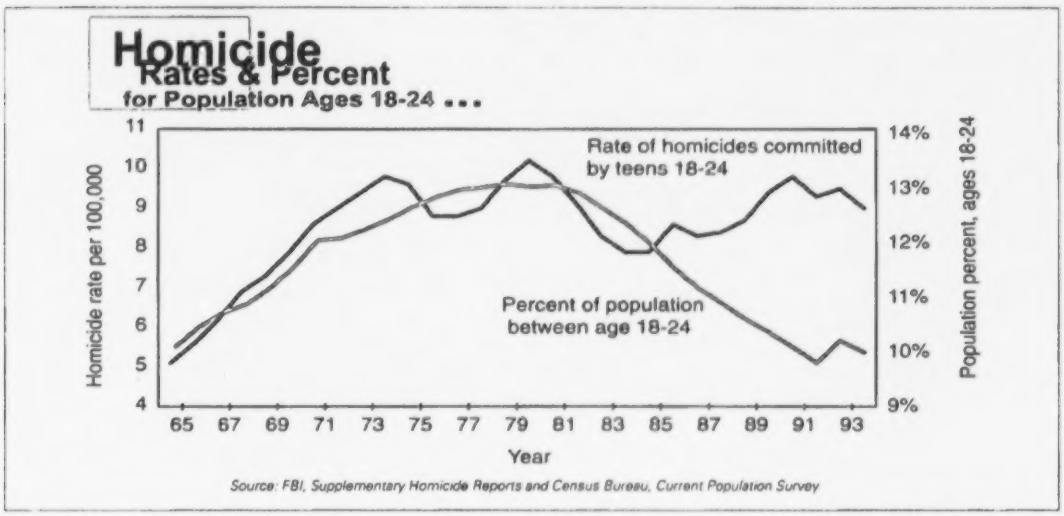
Maybe it's the opening sequence in a new prime time series: Three more dead bodies in 60 seconds of action. Or maybe it's even closer to home. The school principal called. Your child's been involved in *another* fight.

There's no escaping violence. We live in a violent society. How violent? The *World Health Organization* reported that in 1996 the United States had the second highest homicide rate among youth ages 15 to 24 years, of any Western industrialized country. This reflects both violence committed by teens and violence committed against teens. Indeed, the only countries to exceed or come close to the United States are Eastern European countries—the Russian Federation and Lithuania—both in political and economic turmoil. And the rate of homicide in the United States is just about double that in Northern Ireland, a country with a long history of ongoing civil war and strife. Homicide and suicide are the second and third leading causes of death, respectively, for youth ages 15-24, surpassed only by unintentional injury *(Baker, 1992)*.



One difficulty in tracking violence among adolescents is that data on violence committed against youth and data on violence committed by youth are often lumped together. This monograph proposes to look at the most violent crimes committed by youth, when possible, recognizing that violent crimes against youth are often committed by adults. That's why the graph on page 5 is alarming: Beginning in the mid-1980s there is a sudden break in the historically close connection between the homicide rate and the percentage of young adults within the population.

Fox reports several trends *(1997)*. The rate of homicides committed by 18 to 24 year olds has increased 61 percent, from 15.7 to 25.3 per



100,000 while the rate of violent crime committed by those over 25 years has declined. More worrisome is the rate of homicide committed by teenagers between the ages of 14 to 17 years that has doubled from 7.0 per 100,000 in 1985 to 19.1 in 1994.

And, homicides are not the only measure of violence in youth. In 1994 alone, more than 750 children ages 4 to 14 were killed by firearms *(Fox, 1997)*.

Clearly we live in a violent environment, and youth often mirror the violence around them. What can we as professionals, parents and citizens do to stem the tide of violence? How can our children protect themselves from violence?

This monograph has been developed to summarize what we already know about youth and violence. It does not intend to provide an exhaustive review of the literature rather, it is a guide to the lessons experts have learned about youth and violence.

In the next few pages, we will identify ten myths that confound our understanding of the real causes of youth violence. We believe that these myths should be a starting point to consider what common beliefs regarding youth and violence exist in our communities.

A number of leading experts in the area of violence prevention have taken the time to respond to the questions: What is the most important thing you've learned about youth violence? What do you teach your children? What do you teach parents? What do you teach communities? Their responses can be found throughout the text. And, we've identified some violence prevention programs that seem to have a good chance of success.

Our goal is to provide a useful tool for health care professionals and educators, state maternal and child health directors and their adolescent health coordinators, the societies and professional organizations of those who work with children and youth, and the hundreds of government policymakers at local, county, state, regional and national levels. We hope to reach community-level youth-serving agencies such as the United Way and programs that work directly with teens.

Information contained in this monograph should help each to think about the current violence prevention programs they fund or participate in, as well as to consider additional ways that they could help reduce the pervasive nature of violence in our society.

What Contributes to Youth Violence?

During this century, the leading causes of death for adolescents have changed from natural causes to unintentional injury and violence.

In 1933, 75% of deaths among 15-19 year olds were the result of natural causes; in 1993, 80% of deaths among 15-19 year olds were the result of homicide and unintentional injury *(Brindis, Irwin & Millstein, 1992)*. Future demographics point to a significant increase in the number of adolescents living in the United States. To reduce the likelihood of an increase in the pattern of violence, we must consider ways to mobilize our communities to

maintain the positive inroads we have made in reducing adolescent violence.

There is no single reason some children and youth are at risk for committing, or being involved in, violent acts. One factor may be the increasing ecomonic inequality among youth. One in four children in this country is poor, despite a booming U.S. economy *(Li & Bennett, 1998)*. For too many of our adolescents, violence is the only way they know of handling conflict. A variety of sources contribute to youth violence.

Children who are exposed to domestic violence are at risk of using violence.

The exact number of children who are exposed to the estimated 4 million episodes of partner abuse that occur each year is unknown, but it is thought to be substantial. Those who provide health and other care to children and youth need to ask about child abuse and family violence in general for several reasons:

- *Children in families where there is such violence are at greater risk of being abused themselves (Straus & Gelles, 1990).*

Here's What one Expert says...

Katherine Kaufer Christoffel, M.D., M.P.H.
Professor of Pediatric and Preventive Medicine at Northwestern University and Medical Director of the Handgun Epidemic Lowering Plan (HELP) Network at the Violent Injury Prevention Center of Children's Memorial Medical Center, Chicago, IL

The most important thing I've learned is: "... To protect children from violent injuries, we must reduce the likelihood that children will become involved in violence at all. That means from the very early days to nurture them; to set appropriate limits; and to recognize when they are getting involved in risky activities. It means teaching them ways of dealing with conflict that don't risk violence ..."

I teach communities "... when violence does occur, we must be sure it is not deadly. That means ensuring that kids cannot get a hold of guns, primarily handguns. This means removing guns from our homes, making sure they are not in the homes of friends, neighbors and relatives, and taking steps to reduce the number of guns in the community. This requires decision-making and action at the personal, family, neighborhood and community levels ..."

■ *There are studies that suggest that witnessing violence at home may be as traumatic for children as having been victimized themselves in terms of debilitating psychological effects and long-term behavior effects (Zuckerman, Augustyn, Groves & Parker, 1995).*

Children who are themselves abused and who witness the abuse of their mothers and other violence in the home are more likely to grow up to perpetrate violence. They are more likely to be victimized in intimate relationships as well as to become a perpetrator or victim of violence on the streets *(Cappell & Heiner, 1990).*

Children and adolescents use guns when they are easily accessible.

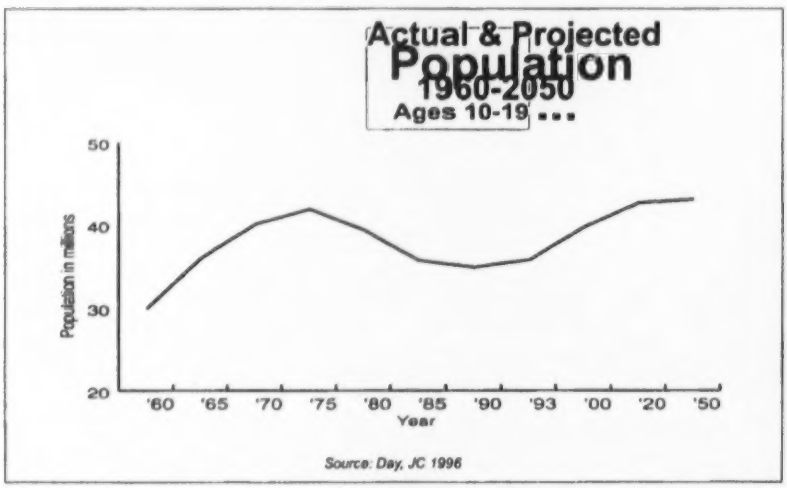
In many areas throughout the country, guns have surpassed motor vehicles as the leading killer of children and youth. The National Center for Health Statistics shows that guns will kill more youth than automobiles by the year 2003 if the current trend continues *(Adams, Shoenborn, & Moss, 1994).* Nearly half of U.S. homes have some type of firearm, and 26% have a handgun. According to one survey of gun owners with children, 30% sometimes or always keep their guns loaded at home. Adolescents living in homes where there is easy access to guns are more likely to be involved in violent behavior. They are more likely to act violently towards others and are at increased risk for suicidal thoughts or attempts *(Resnick et al., 1997).* In fact, by the time they reach adolescence, many adolescents have their own guns. In a national survey of adolescents in 1993, 15% of boys reported that they had carried a gun within the last 30 days and over half said they knew where to get a gun if they wanted one *(Kahn et al., 1996).*

Exposure to violence on television affects child and adolescent behavior.

As early as 1972, the Surgeon General's report, "Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence," found that viewing violent television programs was linked to aggressive behavior in

The fight I witnessed has made me think about violence . . . that fight was not my fight—its participants were not my friends. But they could have been.

Anna, age 14



YOUTH **Violence:**
MYTH **#1**

Violence results from other crimes such as robberies or drug deals

The truth is...

Fewer than 15% of homicides are precipitated by the commission of another crime *(Prothrow-Stith & Spivak, 1992).*

Violence By the numbers ...

200 million

A conservative estimate of the number of firearms in the United States *(American Academy of Pediatrics, 1994)*.

One in Four

Number of American households with handguns *(American Academy of Pediatrics)*.

43:1

Ratio of fatal shootings of family members or acquaintances in suicides, non-justifiable homicides or accidents to each incident in which a gun is used to kill in self-defense *(American Academy of Pediatrics)*.

300%

Increased likelihood of domestic homicide when there is a gun in the home *(American Academy of Pediatrics)*.

1.2 million

Number of latch-key children who have access to guns when they come home from school *(American Academy of Pediatrics)*.

88

Percent of children accidentally injured or killed who are shot in their own home or in the home of relatives or friends *(American Academy of Pediatrics)*.

Zero

The increase in number of juveniles killing with all weapons other than guns *(Fox, 1996)*.

20%

Increase in the number of teens ages 14-17 by 2005 *(Fox)*

children. Children exposed to media violence are more likely to believe that violence is a good way to solve interpersonal conflicts. They may also be more likely to see the world as a dangerouse or mean place and to view more ambiguous situations as threatening.

Conservative estimates indicate that the average American child or teenager views over 10,000 murders, rapes and assaults per year on television *(Resnick et al.)*. That is an average of about 25 acts of violence per day. The media make violence commonplace.

But it's not just exposure to violence that matters. It turns out harmful violence looks harmless on television. A national television violence study identified some 73% of scenes in 2,693 programs from 23 channels where violence goes unpunished: victims are unharmed, show no pain, and there is no long-term physical, emotional or financial price to pay *(DuRant, Getts, Cadenhead, & Woods, 1995)*.

Such programming poses several distinct threats to public health because children:

- *Learn to behave violently;*

Here's What one Expert says...

Cordelia Anderson, M.A.

Director of Sensibilities Inc., Minneapolis, MN

The most important thing I've learned is: "...to remember that many young people work hard to reduce and prevent various forms of violence. We need to celebrate the positive things they do. Instead of being afraid of or blaming young people, we need to be there for them. That means listening, caring, and building on their strengths. Young people need to know ways to deal with their anger, frustrations and setbacks other than resorting to violence, and they need to know what behaviors are appropriate and expected of them ..."

I teach children "... to feel a sense of pride in themselves. I try to educate them about violence and the skills they need to deal with conflicts, protect themselves and promote peace. I try to help them see themselves as capable peacemakers and role model the behaviors I hope to see in them. My children know why I don't let them watch violence and why I don't believe in hitting or guns as ways to solve problems. They also know they are loved and will be listened to ..."

- *Develop an increased appetite for violence;*
- *Have greater tolerance for violence;*
- *Become less aware of harmful consequences of violence; and*
- *Become more fearful of being attacked.*

The National Institute of Mental Health has concluded that "there is increasing consensus among the research community that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs" *(American Psychological Association, 1997).*

Violence in the community and community deterioration contribute to youth violence.

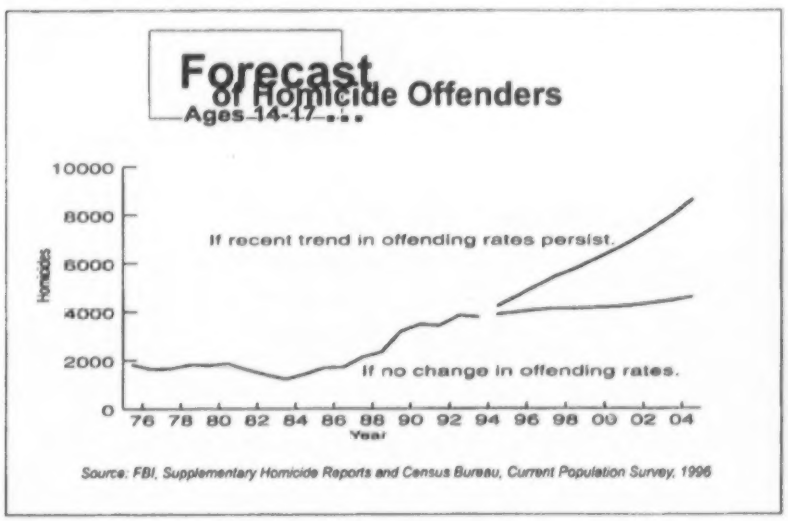
Youth exposed to high rates of violence in their communities come to see violence as inevitable, even if they have never been personally involved in violence. Numerous surveys report alarmingly high percentages of children who witness violence. The studies have reported anywhere from 70% to over 95% of inner city adolescents and preadolescent children have witnessed a robbery, stabbing, shooting or murder. Non-urban children have been studied to a much lesser extent, but one study of suburban middle school children in Pennsylvania and Delaware found that 57% of the students had witnessed such violence *(Campbell & Schwarz, 1996).*

Many of these children describe symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and somatization syndromes *(Singer, Anglin, Song, & Lunghofer, 1995).*

Even an informal survey of middle school students in the San Francisco Bay area indicates how much violence is a part of everyday living. In Motion, a magazine, available on the internet, reports that for nearly all of the students in the low-income urban schools, even those who had never been in a fight before, violence was seen as an

Violence is the one factor that affects everyone. From the rich to the poor, the healthy to the sick, it can destroy lives and change people forever.

Anna, age 14



YOUTH **Violence:**
MYTH **#2**

Violence and homicide are carefully premeditated behaviors

The truth is...

Most violence is unplanned and starts with an argument over something small. Most murders begin with an argument *(Prothrow-Stith & Spivak)*

Here's What one Expert says...

David Hemenway, Ph.D.
Professor of Health Policy, and Director of the Harvard Injury Control Research Center, Harvard University School of Public Health, Boston, MA

The most important thing I've learned is: "...Easy access to guns turns violence into lethal violence. Our written surveys of inner city 7th and 10th graders in Boston, Milwaukee, and Washington DC show that guns are readily available to a substantial portion of these youngsters. In our surveys, 23% of male 7th graders have already carried a concealed handgun. Why? They say for protection or self-defense. Making firearms less available to inner city kids is critically important. The vast majority of kids say they would prefer to live in a world where it is very difficult or impossible for them to get guns ..."

I teach *parents* "... to read to your kid, talk to your kid, spend time with your kid, and provide positive feedback. Then hope you are lucky ..."

unavoidable part of their social reality. That is, when confronted with situations in which violence was a strong possibility, these students were less likely to consider calling upon an adult for protection or help in resolving a dispute," says study author Pedro Noguera, University of California, Berkeley.

Using drugs and alcohol increases the risk of violent youth behavior.

Youth violence is linked to other risk behaviors. In about 65% of all homicides, the perpetrators, the victims or both have been drinking, and similar percentages of stabbings, beatings and domestic violence also involve alcohol. Half of youth homicide victims have elevated blood alcohol levels on autopsy *(Adams, Schoenborn, & Moss)*.

This rate of elevated blood alcohol levels is seen in youth who commit homicide too, if they are caught in time to test *(Prothrow-Stith & Spivak)*.

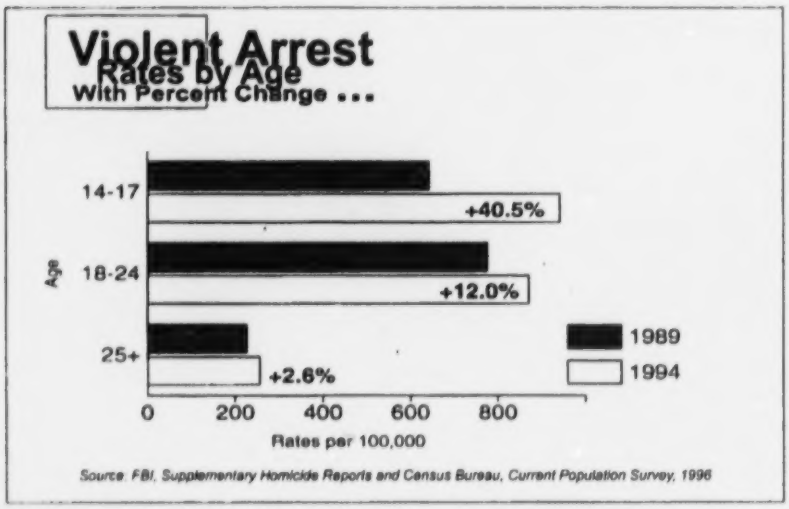
Illegal drug use is also associated with both violence perpetration and victimization among youth *(Kingery, Pruitt, & Hurley, 1992)*.

In a survey of incarcerated youth, the bulk of illegal activities,

Behavioral Symptoms of Witnessing Violence ...

Toddlers	Eating disturbances Developmental regression Language lag Increased "clinginess"
School Age	Increased physical complaints Decreased attention Bedwetting
Adolescents	New onset antisocial behavior Foreshortened sense of the future
All Ages	New trauma-related fears Guilt, mistrust Irritability Acting out, mood swings Withdrawal Sleep problems

(Augustyn, Parker, Groves, & Zuckerman, 1995)



including physical fights, use of weapons and gang membership were associated with frequent alcohol or drug use. Those who used drugs reported a 10-20% increase in involvement in violence compared to non-users. And, the more often a juvenile fought, the more often a weapon was used by someone in the fight *(Morris, et al., 1995)*.

Clearly, carrying a weapon or using drugs and alcohol are risky choices. Resnick and colleagues report in a recent study that the mere presence of drugs, alcohol and tobacco in the home increases the likelihood of adolescents using these substances. We need to focus on ways to help individuals make wise choices about these modifiable risks.

We live in a society that loves guns.

Americans love their guns. In a country where more than 1/3 of all homes have guns, it's no wonder that children and teens use them. And these children and youth do not learn how to shoot guns by watching television. Likewise, if teens have easy access to guns in the home, they are more likely to act violently towards others and are more likely to attempt suicide.

Children learn to use guns before they even go to school; they are taught by their family. Two journalists, Robert N. Adcock and Michael Signer (1998), wrote about the American gun culture in a recent editorial: "America's gun culture is a choice." In the South, children often get the first day of hunting off from school. Of 11 school yard shootings in which at least two

I would see my step-father come home drunk and abuse my mom, so it made me not want to be home. The home is where children should feel safe and loved.

Jaine, age 18

YOUTH **Violence:** MYTH **#3**

Teens are prone to recklessness.

The truth is...

The adolescent years are not inherently reckless. An American senior citizen is three times more likely to murder than a European teen *(Males, 1997)*.

Here's What one Expert Says...

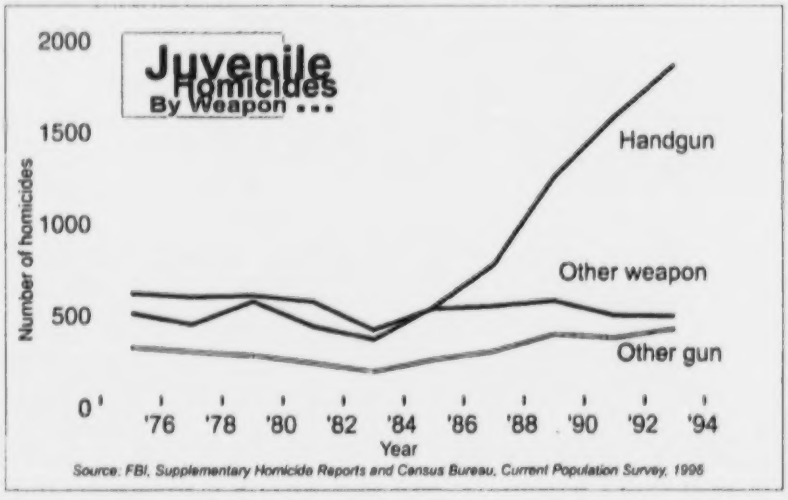
Felton Earls, M.D.
Professor of Human Behavior and Development, Harvard School of Public Health, Department of Maternal and Child Health, Boston, MA

The most important thing I've learned is: "... to understand neighborhoods and communities in great detail. I would never design an intervention for a child without measuring the ways in which neighborhoods are socially organized. How well do neighbors know one another? The more public a neighborhood is, the more likely violence prevention is to work. The more collective the activity, the greater the efficacy ..."

I teach communities "... that the more willing a neighborhood is to engage kids, the less opportunity there is for episodes of violence ..."

people were killed or wounded over the past five years, six took place in southern states.

But the South isn't the only region that promotes a gun culture. Adults in every state protect their right to own guns above developing policies to protect youth. It's no wonder that, since 1984, the number of juveniles killing with a gun has quadrupled, while the number killing with all other weapons combined has remained virtually constant *(Fox, 1996)*.



Source: FBI, Supplementary Homicide Reports and Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1996

What Protects Children and Youth From Violence?

Not only have America's experts learned what predisposes youth to violent behavior, they have also learned a little about what protects kids.

Here are some of the things we know protect children and youth from violence:

Children need connections with families, schools and friends.

To put it simply, parents matter. When youth report a low level of connectedness to their parents, they are more likely to be involved in violent behavior. Youth are also protected when parents are more frequently present in the home at key times of the day.

Schools also matter. Students who report positive feelings of connectedness to school are moderately protected from violent behavior.

Academic achievement also makes a difference. Those who have to repeat a grade are at greater risk for involvement in antisocial behaviors.

How do teens talk about connectedness to school? Students who report that teachers treat them fairly, feel a part of the school, and

say other kids are not prejudiced, feel connected *(Blum & Mann Rinehart, 1997).*

Peer relationships also make a difference. In one study, half of all rejected boys were aggressive and two-thirds of all aggressive boys were rejected by their peers. This failure in developing peer relations takes on a life of its own. Rejection by the group of mainstream children leads the antisocial child to seek out a group of deviant peers similar to themselves *(Rivara & Farrington, 1995).*

This same study shows the opposite is also true. When a group of 7-15 year old "antisocial" boys

She did it because she like the way her fists connected with their jaws. She yelled the same swear words with the same ferocity as her father.

Abby, age 17

YOUTH Violence: MYTH #4

Acts of violence are usually committed by strangers.

The truth is...

The teen committing violence and the victim usually know each other. The typical adolescent male who commits homicide is a friend or acquaintance (54%). Most adolescent females are nearly as likely to kill a family member (41%) as a friend or acquaintance (46%). *(Males)*

was placed in a community association group of mainstream boys (approximately 25 mainstream boys with one or two "antisocial" boys), the influence of a normal peer group appeared to be crucial in changing the antisocial behavior of the deviant boys.

Children need to learn how to resolve conflict nonviolently through example.

How can youth be influenced to make safer individual choices?

Clearly, parents and family are central in the lives of teenagers. When a parent is physically present in the home at key times during the day (in the morning, after school, at dinner, and at bedtime), children are protected from behaviors that can damage them. Parents model good behavior.

Unfortunately, American young people have lost, on average, 10 to 12 hours per week of parental time *Fuchs, Reklis, 1992).*

Children benefit from one-on-one attention and mentoring. In addition to modeling non-violent behavior for immediate violence reduction, mentors ideally would also provide support in school and career role-modeling. In these ways, mentors can help young people break the cycle of poverty that so often underlies violence.

Participants of recent focus groups of at-risk youth believed that mentoring programs could work. Focus group participants, however, were concerned that mentors be committed to providing the time and energy that such a relationship would require—one hour a week is simply not enough *(Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, 1997).*

Here's What one Expert says...

Frederick P. Rivara, M.D., M.P.H.

Professor of Pediatrics and Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology, University of Washington, and Director of the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center, Seattle, WA

The most important thing I've learned is: "... early childhood interventions hold the best promise for preventing youth violence. Interventions in adolescence are still important, but interventions that begin even as early as the prenatal period are more effective. Interventions such as home visitations, early childhood education, and early identification of behavioral problems have the greatest impact on future youth violence..."

I teach parents "... to monitor how their child is doing in school and who their child spends time with. Parents should be vigilant about education and make sure that school is a successful experience for their kids. And if failures do happen, parents should work with the school to make sure school becomes a successful experience..."

Children need a safe, supportive place to go after school

Young people cannot flourish, develop and properly mature into productive citizens in a climate of fear and chaos. Children need safe places and structured activities during non-school hours so that they can study, play and receive the necessary guidance to reach their potential in life.

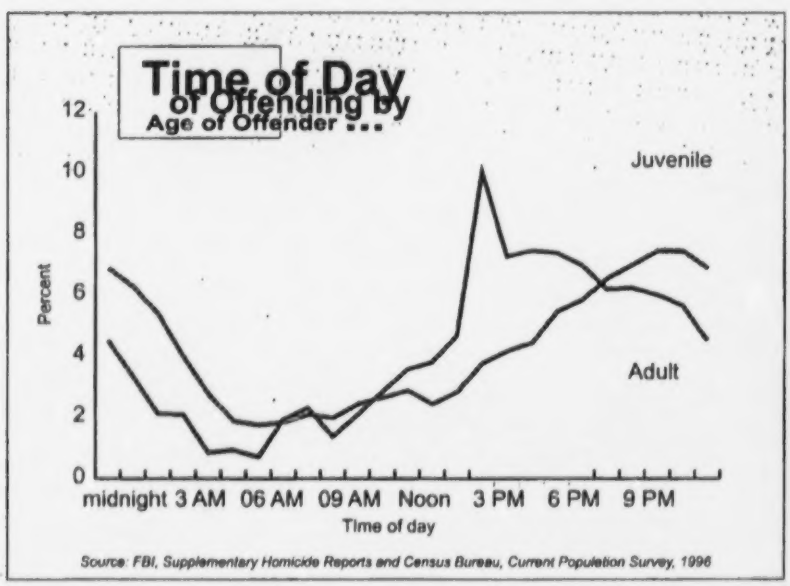
The FBI finds that most juvenile crime occurs between 12:30 and 3:00 P.M. So, from the standpoint of violence prevention, after school care may provide a more consistently nurturing and less aversive environment for many children than home *(Rivara & Farrington)*.

In North Carolina, findings from a project suggest that, for children exposed to multiple risks at home, it may be more cost-effective to provide quality child and after school care for children than to intervene directly with parents.

Successful programs don't always address the issue of violence directly. When staff at the Lowell Middle School in West Oakland, Massachusetts realized that many of their students were going to unsafe homes or streets at the end of the day, teachers and others were encouraged to stay later and supervise after-school activities in the school. The Lowell Middle School, a violence-project, didn't just focus on violence per se. When the school realized that many children came to school hungry, they started offering three free meals a day to students, a small investment with a huge payoff.

Gun shots . . . you look and see your best friend lying on the ground covered with blood. The people who shot your friend run off in the darkness, while you fear that they might come back for you. This is youth violence.

Thanh, age 17



YOUTH **Violence:** MYTH **#5**

There are violent types and victim types.

The truth is...

Youth murder and violence often will make [illegible] perpetrator [illegible] victim other times. A teen with a violence-related [illegible] higher risk for both being victim of crime and for victimizing [illegible] (Prothrow-Stith and Spivak)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This program does what all successful programs do. It assessed the children's needs and was flexible enough to meet them. The bureaucratic response that meals are not part of a violence prevention program was never used *(Noguera, 1997)*. Offering meals feeds both the body and the soul. It says "we care."

Supervision appears to be the key: Poor parental supervision is one of the best predictors of committing violent crimes *(McCord, 1979)*.

But being home is not enough. It is, rather, when a young person experiences a sense of caring and concern from a parent that there appears to be less association in violence. Having access to a parent, and perhaps parental supervision in general, matters most *(Blum & Mann Rinehart)*.

Children need a healthy home environment.

In the 1997 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, the home environment emerges as central in shaping many health outcomes for American youth.

Current data suggest that the learning of aggression occurs at a very young age. One study found that some of the most important precursors of aggression were harsh attitudes and discipline experienced by the time boys are eight years old. Disagreement over parenting, poor parental supervision and authoritarian child rearing attitudes can encourage violent behavior. Prominent research indicates that interventions to improve parenting skills may prevent or reduce children's aggressive behavior. The aggressive "scripts" that children learn very early become very resistant to change *(McCord)*.

Many parents are positively motivated but they don't know how to parent. For single parents and parents with little or no external support systems, parenting can be particularly difficult. Without extended families such as aunts, uncles, grandparents and other adults to provide guidance in raising a child, as well as respite from its constant burdens, child rearing can be lonely and frustrating. Effective parenting needs to be taught. One quality program teaches these five skills:

Mark L. Rosenberg, M.D., M.P.P.
Assistant Surgeon General, Director, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA

Here's what one Expert says...

The most important thing I've learned is: "...we can prevent violence. Violence is not something we have to live with. It's not a fact of life. We don't have to accept it. There are many things we can do. We can target the individual, the social environment and the physical environment. We know the kinds of things we can do on an individual level. But what is most important and what works best? Things we can target in the social environment include education, jobs and social norms that promote safety rather than violence. Interventions in the physical environment include safe passages to and from school and limiting access to drugs and alcohol. The bottom line is that we can prevent violence. There are many things we can do. Many things, when done right, do work ..."

I teach parents "...we must make sure that our children grow up in a social environment that promotes safety and a physical environment that gives them the best chance for a good and safe life. Of course, we need to focus on giving our own children the right guidance, nurturance and tools. But we can't just focus on personal things such as giving them a good education and mentoring and nurturing. We need to intervene on a community level. Community level improvements are not just for other kids, but for our own too ..."

- *Notice what a child is doing;*
- *Monitor behavior;*
- *State rules clearly;*
- *Make rewards and punishments contingent on behavior; and*
- *Negotiate disagreements so that conflicts do not escalate (Hobbie, 1995).*

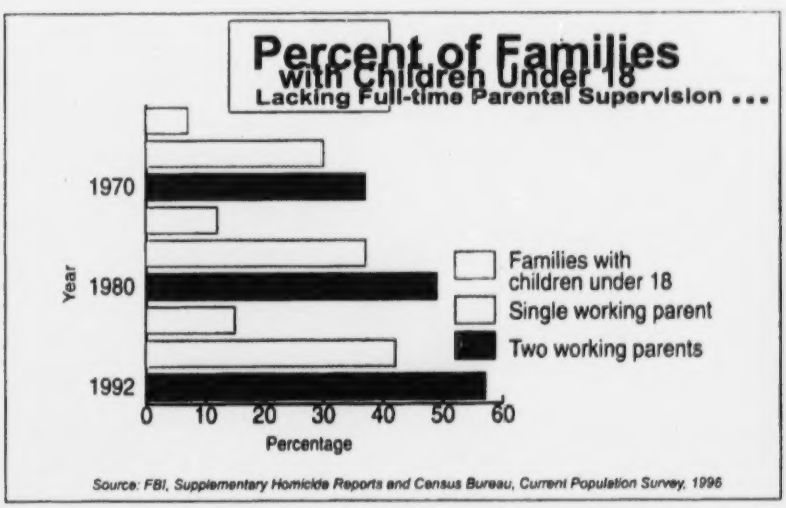
Werner's 30-year study of "vulnerable, but invincible" youth (1982) identifies key factors that resilient youth have in common. Resilient youth:

- *Received a lot of attention from the primary caretaker during infancy;*
- *Grew up in a family of fewer than five children, with at least two years between the index child and the next younger sibling;*
- *Had many caretakers other than the mother of the household (father, grandparents, older siblings);*
- *Grew up with structure and household rules during adolescence;*
- *Had a cohesive family; and*
- *Had access to an informal network of kin and friends during adolescence.*

Youth from such healthy homes have lower levels of violence, both violence against others and suicide—violence turned against oneself. There is no set of characteristics for a "healthy home." Regardless of the number of parents in a household, regardless of families' degree of wealth or poverty, and regardless of race and ethnicity, children who report feeling connected to a parent are protected against many health risks, including violence and suicidal thoughts and attempts.

I think that if adults would stop hassling us, locking us up, get off our backs and try to help us, then we would be able to . . . get good jobs . . . kids today really have nothing to lose. Maybe if you loved us, we would be better citizens.

Eric, age 15



YOUTH **Violence:**
MYTH **#6**

Girls are not violent.

The truth is ...

Although boys are more often involved in violence, about one-quarter of girls report fighting. Girls are becoming perpetrators of violence more frequently (Hausman, Spivak, & Prothrow-Stith, 1995).

Here's What one Expert says...

Howard Pinderhughes, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Social and Behavioral Sciences, School of Nursing, University of California, San Francisco, CA

The most important thing I've learned is "...the factors that are insulating and foster resiliency are those which allow youth to exert power and gain a sense of mastery in their own lives—whether mastery is achieved through arts, athletics, academics, community participation or caretaking of family members..."

I teach parents, young people, community members and advocates "...that the most important part of violence prevention is understanding conflict. ...it is far more effective to train young people to recognize the dynamics of a violent situation and to avoid it than to teach them to resolve conflict which in street settings, outside of institutions, can actually raise their risk of violent victimization ..."

Violence Prevention Programs

There are hundreds of programs designed to prevent violence. Some come and go depending on funding. Evaluating these programs is complex, expensive and, in truth, few have been evaluated.

We do know that violence is not one thing, but many. Violence occurs on a continuum from bullying and verbal abuse, to fighting and homicide.

Many of the diverse and complex causes of violence are deeply embedded within the social fabric of family, neighborhood, and community. Core public health concepts emphasize the prevention of violence before it occurs, join science with effective policymaking, and integrate the efforts of diverse organizations, communities and scientific disciplines.

And, while violence is an important public health problem, little is known about which of the hundreds of violence prevention programs work. Many of the most promising approaches to preventing youth violence have not been rigorously evaluated. Evaluating community programs is a science in and of itself, and evaluating programs such as violence prevention in community settings is confounded by multiple variables, including the:

- *Need for collaboration of a variety of organizations;*
- *Tension between scientific and programmatic interests;*
- *Enrollment of control groups;*
- *Subject mobility;*

- *Limited number of practical measurement instruments; and*
- *Complex relationships between interventions and outcomes.*

The lack of evaluation data on violence prevention programs is frustrating to those who are program designers. Money may allow prevention scientists to start pilot programs, but rarely will federal agencies provide funds for evaluation.

We must gain a better understanding of promising strategies to reduce juvenile violence. We can start by looking at the success of other prevention programs that address teenage risk behaviors, such as substance abuse, and have strong longitudinal evaluations.

Promising programs ought to be multifaceted, address a variety of needs, and reach many people in the community. Dusenbury et al. (1997) believe violence prevention programs are likely to have nine key components:

1. Involve family, peer, media and community

Youth who feel connected to family, school and community are at lower risk for violence; programs that incorporate many strategies that promote connectedness are more likely to be successful.

2. Begin in the early grades and continue through adolescence

Important personal and social skills develop throughout childhood and adolescence.

3. Are developmentally appropriate

What is a risk factor at one age can be a protective factor at another. Different interventions are appropriate at different ages.

Adults think that the only way to solve youth violence is to lock us up . . . we crave love, but all you want to give us is hate.

Eric, age 15

Lessons in evaluating Violence Prevention Programs . . .

How do you measure something that hasn't happened? That's the singular challenge facing the men and women who evaluate violence prevention programs. Here are some lessons learned from past program evaluation.

- Evaluators, practitioners, researchers and funders need to become partners, especially during the design of a violence prevention program.
- Evaluation is both a science and an art. It provides a bridge between the scientific rigor of the researcher and the hands-on wisdom of the practitioner.
- Evaluators must do more than count. They need to examine relationships. Are members of a coalition communicating effectively? Do they make referrals to one-another? Do they collaborate in advocacy? Do they make joint grant applications?
- The lessons learned from individual evaluation projects need to be widely disseminated.

(Raghavan and Cohen, 1997).

YOUTH **Violence:** MYTH **#7**

We just need more police, more jails and stiffer sentences.

The truth is...

The criminal justice system measures are not very effective at preventing the most common type of violence: unpremeditated violence arising from an argument between two people who know each other. *(Prothrow-Stith & Spivak)*

Here's What one Expert says...

Iris Borowsky, M.D., Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

The most important thing I've learned is "...factors that are protective against involvement in interpersonal and self-directed violence among teens include a sense of connectedness to family, emotional health, and success in school—both in terms of academic performance and a sense of connectedness to school. Strategies that help families develop and maintain strong connections with their children, their children's schools and communities are likely to reduce the risk of youth involvement in violence..."

I teach children "...that violence hurts and that talking things out or walking away works. I strive to wrap my children in protective layers of love, respect, approval, and positive experiences and role models..."

4. Promote competence
Competence and mastery allow children and youth to feel in control. This is especially important in the area of violence prevention. Competence needs to be developed in the areas of self-control, decision-making, problem-solving, listening, and communication skills.

5. Involve interaction and rehearsal
Students learn best by doing, and learning is reinforced through a variety of activities.

6. Promote cultural identity
Programs have the highest chance of success when they address the needs of a community in ways that are meaningful.

7. Provide staff training
Staff development and teacher training ensure that a program will be implemented as intended by the program developers. The teacher is in an important position to recognize problems related to violence and aggression, given appropriate training, and can refer students to appropriate resources in or out of school.

8. Promote positive school climate
Programs need to focus on and develop positive elements within the environment to makes schools attractive, safe and welcoming. When the physical plant or classrooms are dangerous, dirty or unkempt, students think "nobody cares."

9. Foster and develop a climate that does not tolerate violence, aggression or bullying
Effective schools handle aggression in ways that promote peace. By the end of elementary school, middle school or high school, striking differences will exist in the behavior and attitudes of students in schools where aggression is tolerated and in students in schools where agression is not tolerated.

These criteria represent the best thinking on approaches to school-based violence prevention and were gathered in interviews conducted with 15 experts on topics related to school-based violence. However, the key to success is identifying strategies and programs that can be used in a variety of settings. Schools cannot do it alone. Partnerships among community, school and family are necessary to launch successful violence prevention campaigns.

The violence prevention programs and projects highlighted on the following pages are just a few that seem to be promising and were chosen, in part, because they appear to meet some or many of these criteria.

Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) ❶❷3 5 ✪◈♥

RCCP National Center
40 Exchange Pl, Ste 1111
New York, NY 10005
(212) 509-0022
Fax: (212) 509-1095
E-mail: esrrccp@aol.com
www.benjerry.com/esr/about-rccp.html

Resolving Conflict Creatively is a comprehensive school-based program that provides training in conflict resolution and intergroup relations to students in grades K-12. It originally began as a collaborative effort with the New York City Public Schools and now operates in several other school districts. RCCP collaborates with Educators for Social Responsibility (Cambridge, MA) as well. Components of the program include classroom instruction for elementary, secondary, middle, and high school students; a peer mediation program, training for teachers and administrators, a parent component that offers direct training and a train-the-trainers component, and target intervention for high-risk youth.

The model is designed to prevent violence and create peaceable nonviolent communities of learning in schools. A problem-solving approach is used to resolve daily conflicts. Students are taught to respect one another, appreciate diversity in their classmates and avoid the use of

I have been a victim of violence and it has been a large part of my life. Today I receive counseling but I still wonder why I have to get help when the people that have destroyed my life are free?

Miriam age 16

Key to the Symbols . . .

- ❶ **Include family, peer, media and community**
- ❷ **Begin in early grades and continue through adolescence**
- 3 **Developmentally appropriate**
- 4 **Promote competence**
- 5 **Involve interaction and rehearsal**
- ◈ **Promote cultural identity**
- ✪ **Provide staff training**
- ◈ **Promote positive school climate**
- ♥ **Foster climate intolerent to violence and aggression**

YOUTH Violence: MYTH #8

Violent teens are born that way and can never lead productive lives.

The truth is...

Even among incarcerated teens, only 6% are "hard-core" violent youth *(Wilson J. in Norquist)*

Indeed, only a tiny percentage of teens who commit violent acts have organic problems such as central nervous system impairments that predispose them to violent behavior *(Prothrow-Stith & Spivak)*

Key to the Symbols . . .

- ❶ **Include family, peer, media and community**
- ❷ **Begin in early grades and continue through adolescence**
- 3 **Developmentally appropriate**
- 4 **Promote competence**
- 5 **Involve interaction and rehearsal**
- ◈ **Promote cultural identity**
- ⊛ **Provide staff training**
- ◈ **Promote positive school climate**
- ♥ **Foster climate intolerant to violence and aggression**

negative stereotypes. Key component skills include active listening, assertiveness, expressing feelings, perspective-taking, cooperation, negotiation and ways to interrupt expressions of bias or prejudice. Staff and students are trained in mediation and negotiation skills and these skills enable students to express and control anger appropriately. Peer mediators provide a peer model for nonviolence and conflict resolution. The parent component provides training to help parents develop better ways of dealing with conflict and prejudice at home. Administrators are trained to provide the leadership necessary to achieve effective program implementation. Schools must make a five-year commitment to the program.

Evaluation results indicate that the program has a positive effect on students with fewer fights, less verbal abuse and more caring. Teachers, parents and students like the program and believe RCCP has a positive influence on students.

❶ 3 5 ⊛ ◈ ♥

Safe Dates Project

Vangie Foshee, Ph.D.
Dept. of Health Behavior and Health Education
CB #7400; Rosenau Hall
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7400
(919) 966-6353; Fax: (919) 966-7955
E-mail: vfoshee@sph.unc.edu

Arthur L. Kellerman, M.D., M.P.H.
Professor of Emergency Medicine and Director, Emory Center for Injury Control, Atlanta, GA

Here's What one Expert says...

The most important thing I've learned is: "... to reduce the lethality of youth violence by aggressively and proactively targeting the acquisition and carrying of weapons, especially guns. Although this is not a definitive fix of the youth violence problem, it is an effective near and middle term strategy. It can help give urban communities hope, and that is an important, practical place to start. This is one way we can address youth violence on a community level and make a difference..."

I teach <u>parents</u> "... that besides just being there, the most important thing parents can do is read to their kids. Early literacy and success in school are so important. But reading to kids goes beyond just developing literacy and cognitive abilities. It reflects a time commitment to children in their early years. Families (however they are defined) and other relationships to adults are crucial. These relationships need to start early and be sustained. Mentoring and after school programs are pale imitations compared to the real thing..."

Safe Dates is a primary and secondary prevention program that aims to prevent dating violence perpetration by both boys and girls in a rural North Carolina county. In-school activities for students in grades 8 and 9 include a student-conducted theater production, a 10-session curriculum, and a poster contest. These school-based activities are designed to change dating violence norms and teach conflict management skills and help-seeking behaviors. Thirty-three community organizations were involved in the original study. Activities aim to increase school, parental and community acceptance. Community activities include special resources for youth in violent relationships, training for families and professionals, and peer and provider training on help-giving. Baseline data has been collected. Initial evaluation indicates that the program shows promise for prevention of date violence (Foshee, Bauman, Arriaga, Helms, Koch, & Linder, 1998).

One time my friends and I almost killed someone. Once, I almost killed myself.

Sabrina, age 13

Second Step

Committee for Children
2203 Airport Way South, Ste 500
Seattle, WA 98134-2027
(800) 634-4449 (toll-free); (206) 343-1223; Fax: (206) 343-1445;
http://www.cfchildren.org

Second Step is a school-based violence prevention curriculum for preschool through Grade 9 students. It is designed to change children's behaviors and attitudes by teaching skills that reduce impulsive and aggressive behaviors while increasing students' social skills. Grade-specific curricula focus on empathy, impulse control, problem-solving and anger management, and social skills thought to be lacking in persons more likely to commit violent or aggressive acts. The program uses modeling, practicing and reinforcing to teach the necessary skills, and lessons are developmentally appropriate. The Second Step curriculum has a Spanish supplement for teachers of the Spanish language or bilingual classrooms. *A Family Guide to Second Step: Parenting Strategies for a Safer Tomorrow* is the family component of the program because families play an important role in teaching social skills. This video-based program familiarizes parents and caregivers with the curriculum and helps them reinforce skills at home.

The Committee for Children provides extensive guidance for successful implementation in schools, districts and agencies and two training models: staff training and training for trainers. While two school districts reflect a positive experience with this program, its success depends on a well-developed, coordinated process.

YOUTH **Violence:** MYTH **#9**

Black youth are more violent than white youth.

The truth is...

Skin color does not predispose a youth to violence; other factors do. Poor youth are much more likely to commit violent acts than non-poor youth. When several studies compared homicide rates according to socioeconomic status, researchers observed that the disparity in homicide rates between blacks and whites virtually disappeared. *(Prothrow-Stith & Spivak)*

Here's what one Expert says...

Robert Willam Blum, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor of Pediatrics and Director of the Division of General Pediatrics and Adolesecent Health at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

The most important thing I've learned is "...we rarely implement some very basic things that we know make a difference. We believe the myth that if you own a gun you are able to protect yourself. The opposite is true. More kids have been dying recently not because more kids are becoming violent, but rather because the use of lethal weapons is on the rise. If we truly want to protect kids, we have to keep guns out of the environments in which they live ..."

I teach communities "... what works in violence prevention, what works in pregnancy prevention and substance abuse reduction is *not* focusing solely on the negative. Programs that make a difference understand that kids who are involved in violence are faced with a whole set of life situations that predispose them to aggression. To reduce violence requires addressing these underlying issues. To reduce violence means to invest in kids. The alternative is to build prisons ..."

Youth Crime Watch of America ❶❷3️⃣4️⃣5️⃣6️⃣⭐8️⃣♥

9300 S. Dadeland Blvd, Ste 100
Miami, FL 33156-2704
(305) 670-2409; Fax: (305) 670-3805
E-mail: ycwa@ycwa.org
http://www.ycwa.org

Youth Crime Watch of America (YCWA) is a non-profit organization which operates in 16 states and is dedicated to enabling youth and youth advisors to actively participate in reducing crime and drug use in their schools and communities. The basic principles of the program are the development of positive values, good citizenship, and self-confidence. Because youth are part of their communities, they must actively participate in the solution to problems of crime and drugs. Students and advisors identify problems in their schools, neighborhoods, public housing sites, recreational centers or parks. They select appropriate activities and run the actual projects. The organization's mascot is Casey, the crime watching cat.

Leadership training is offered either on-site or at special leadership retreats. YCWA and the National Crime Prevention Council co-sponsor the National Youth Crime Prevention Conference, an annual conference for students, school administrators, law enforcement officials and community leaders. The conference highlights national anti-crime, drug and violence prevention programs. YCWA projects include the Bus Safety Program, a project that stresses the importance of school bus safety, and Student/ Varsity Patrol, a program for school leaders who patrol school property to reduce the number of crime-related incidents. While this program has received recognition by the U.S. Department of Education, no formal evaluation has been completed.

Self Enhancement, Inc. ❶❷3️⃣4️⃣5️⃣6️⃣⭐8️⃣♥

Violence Prevention Program
3920 N Kerby Av
Portland, OR 97227-1255
(503) 249-1721; Fax: (503) 249-1955

Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI) is a comprehensive network of programs serving more than 800 high-risk children and families. SEI builds individual self-esteem and empowers the community by combining violence prevention education, academic assistance, personal guidance, and family support. The programs address conflict resolution/non-violent alternatives and violence in the media in order to help students successfully

complete their education, actively participate in their communities and care about each other. Services are based on the Relationship Model: All relationships between service providers and clients must be based on integrity and respect, basic standards of behavior and interaction. Because the quality of the service depends on the quality of the relationship, service providers must really care for clients and be prepared to serve them as parent, mentor and instructor, depending on what is needed at the time. Students must understand expected standards of conduct and learn to evaluate their own behavior.

The framework for SEI programs is resiliency—caring, supportive adults, meaningful involvement, and high expectations. Programs serve students in grades 2-12, and services include a summer program that emphasizes academic and life skills, in-school classes and after-school activities and tutoring, and a number of special activities, trips, and outings. Parent involvement includes parent groups and activities for the entire family.

Project evaluation utilized the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Individual Protective Factor Index, and the Ethnic Identity Scale. Findings include declines in the prevalence of physical fighting and reduction in the prevalence of weapon carrying.

Key to the Symbols . . .

- ❶ Include family, peer, media and community
- ❷ Begin in early grades and continue through adolescence
- ❸ Developmentally appropriate
- ❹ Promote competence
- ❺ Involve interaction and rehearsal
- ❻ Promote cultural identity
- ❼ Provide staff training
- ❽ Promote positive school climate
- ▼ Foster climate intolerant to violence and aggression

Advice for Parents . . .

- Talk with your children regularly about what they see in their environment that frightens them. Children's ability to handle violence is a learned strategy that parents can foster through open communication.
- Set up regular family routines—dinnertime, homework, bedtime rituals, for example. Children of all ages find routine helpful in dealing with other stresses in their lives.
- Find out what your children excel at and encourage them to develop it.
- Be available to listen to your children's needs, concerns and desires. You don't need to be able to solve every problem, but you do need to listen and hear your children's concerns.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, 1994

YOUTH **Violence:** MYTH **#10**

The truth is...

Key to the Symbols ...

- ❶ **Include family, peer, media and community**
- ❹ **Begin in early grades and continue through adolescence**
- 3 **Developmentally appropriate**
- 4 **Promote competence**
- 5 **Involve interaction and rehearsal**
- 6 **Promote cultural identity**
- 8 **Provide staff training**
- ◈ **Promote positive school climate**
- ♥ **Foster climate intolerant to violence and aggression**

❶ 3 4 5 6 8 ♥

Teens, Crime, and the Community (TCC)
c/o National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K St NW, 2nd floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
(202) 466-6272, Ext 152; Fax: (202) 296-1356
E-mail: tcc@ncpc.org
http://www.nationaltcc.org

This national program operates in approximately 600 sites in all 50 states as a strategy to reduce crime, prevent delinquency, and involve young people in community crime prevention efforts.

The program enables teens to get involved in crime prevention through curriculum about the causes of crime, crime prevention and action projects. Programs operate in schools and in community settings. The program offers service learning opportunities, a leadership development component, and interaction with community members who serve as resource persons. *We Can Work It Out! A Guide To Problem-Solving Through Mediation* is the vehicle for teaching conflict management skills and the mediation process. Staff provide technical assistance to help launch and fund projects. Program evaluation indicates enhanced prosocial and anti-delinquent attitudes among student participants.

Here's what one Expert says...

Ronald G. Slaby, Ph.D.
Lecturer on Education and Pediatrics, Harvard University, and Senior Scientist at the Education Development Center, Newton, MA

The most important thing I've learned is "... Violent youth think about violence and approach violent situations very differently from their high school peers.They need to change their habits of thought. I say to kids, "Can you change your habits of thought?" Of course you can! But it's like answering the telephone. Have you ever noticed how adults answer the phone exactly the same way every time? They could change how they answer the phone, of course, but they would have to do two things: First, they would have to think of an alternative, and second, they would have to practice their new response before the phone rings. You can't wait for the phone to ring to think of a new response. When someone is in your face, that's too late. You have to think through and practice what you are going to do before the violent situation arises. Violence is learned so it can be unlearned..."

I teach children "... You don't have to be the aggressor or the victim to be involved in a fight. Bystanders are a part of the fight too. Bystanders can escalate or heat up a situation or they can prevent or cool down a confrontation. One bystander might say, "Hey, are you going to take that from him?!" and encourage a fight but another might say, "Hey, cool it, it's not that important, let's go" and help to prevent a fight..."

Project PAVE

(Promoting Alternatives to Violence through Education)

2051 York St
Denver, CO 80205-5713
(303) 322-2382
Fax: (303) 322-0032
E-mail: projectpave@uswest.net
http://www.projectpave.org

Project PAVE is a nonprofit organization that provides violence prevention education and services to youth and their families. The main feature of the project is counseling and education designed to break the generational cycle of violence. Youth are helped to *un*learn violence and replace it with appropriate relationship and conflict management skills. An educational component is available for K-12 classrooms and community organizations. Students learn triggers to violence, how to protect themselves, and how to choose alternatives to violence when faced with conflict. Topics (age-appropriate) include relationships and gang violence, child abuse, incest, racism, dating violence and parenting skills.

Family components are important to the program. The Family Enhancement Program provides a six-week intervention group to youth who witness violence in their families. Counseling is also available to these youth. Parent support groups and training of teachers and other community members are included in Project PAVE's activities.

Internal evaluation of the program showed that less than 8 percent of youth age 8-18 committed another offense. In addition, middle school students reported that they know more about violence, felt safer, and changed their behavior.

PeaceBuilders©

Heartsprings, Inc.
P.O. Box 12158
Tucson, AZ 85732
(520) 322 9977; Fax: (520) 322-9983
E-mail:custre@heartsprings.org.

PeaceBuilders© is a community-based, systemic approach for promoting children's competencies and resiliency. It reduces the risk of both violence and substance abuse while increasing the competencies that improve academic outcomes. It is based on five "principles" used by all people in the school building: Praise People, Give Up Put-Downs, Seek Wise People

Advice For Teens . . .

Nearly one in 10 high school students will experience physical violence from someone they're dating. Even more teens will experience verbal or emotional abuse during the relationship.

Often a relationship doesn't start out violent, but the violence starts after the two people have known each other for a while.

Every relationship has problems and upsets. That's just part of life. But if you see patterns of uncontrolled anger, jealousy, or possessiveness, or if there is shoving, slapping, forced sex or other physical violence—even once—it's time to find help.

You have a right to be treated with respect and to not be harmed physically or emotionally by another person. Violence and abuse are not acceptable in any relationships.

What's the first step in turning the situation around?

Take it seriously. Listen to yourself. If you feel that someone is abusing you, trust those feelings. Take it seriously.

What's the second step?

Take care of yourself. You're too valuable to settle for love that hurts. Don't stay silent—find support and help.

(American Psychological Association, 1998)

Influences on Responses to Violence

Age
Preschool children who witness significant violence are more vulnerable to negative effects than older children.

Gender
Boys often exhibit more overt behavioral problems after exposure than girls do. Girls are more likely to turn their feelings inward.

Familiarity
Children are more affected if the perpetrator or victim is known to them. They are probably most affected if the perpetrator or victim is a parent.

Frequency
In general, chronic exposure is psychologically more harmful than a single episode.

Proximity
Seeing someone get shot, for example, is likely to be more traumatic than simply hearing the sound of gunshots, particularly when they know the person.

Specifics
The impact of a violent event depends, in part, on whether it was life-threatening or not, whether another person caused it rather than an impersonal force of nature, and whether it resulted in injury or death.
(Augustyn, Parker, McAlister Groves & Zuckerman)

(as advisors and friends), Notice Hurts You Cause, and Right Wrongs. The program fosters modeling of positive behavior by staff; students and others copy these behaviors. PeaceBuilders© provides tools to cue and reward Peace Building so that the principles are not just talk but "action." PeaceBuilders© provides tools for rebuilding the peace when there is anger, upset, and even fighting.

Studies funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show positive behavior change including reductions in assaults, injuries, vandalism and serious discipline problems. Teachers report more satisfaction with their jobs and students feel safer at school. Materials are available for students, teachers, support staff, administrators, families and the general community so that the program can be supported and echoed at home, in after-school programs, in the mass media and in the community.

It takes schools aproximately three years to fully implement and achieve the benefits of PeaceBuilders©. Schools starting on the program should have four hours of staff development during each of these first years, and it is most effective if both instructional and support staff are involved since "everyone is a PeaceBuilder©."

Here's What one Expert says...

Peter Stringham, M.D.
Director of the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, Boston, MA

The most important thing I've learned is: "...Our inner cities are filled with natural peacemakers—young men and women who consider themselves of high value and who consider everyone they meet as people of equally high value.

These heroic men and women respond to potentially violent conflicts—not by running away—but by treating the aggressor with respect, listening to their legitimate complaints, and either resolving the conflict nonviolently or walking away and taking their friends with them ..."

I teach children "... that the stories of Robin Hood, Star Wars, Power Rangers and Ninja Turtles are basically false.

The world is not really made up of bad guys who are unreachable except through violence. Children need to value themselves and others as the infinitely valuable things that they are. They need to be neither victims nor bullies, instigators nor cowards, nor uninvolved when it comes to conflict. They can be people who approach problems and solve them without using violence ..."

Resources

There are many violence prevention centers and programs in communities and Universities across the country. Here are a few that can provide additional information and advice.

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
University of Colorado at Boulder
Institute of Behavioral Sciences #10
Campus Box 442
Boulder, CO 80309-0442
Main Phone: (303) 492-1032
Information House: (303) 492-8465
FAX: (303) 443-3297
E-mail: cspv@colorado.edu
http://www.Colorado.EDU/cspv

This information clearinghouse maintains four interdisciplinary databases for violence-related research, curricula, prevention interventions and data collection tools. Free topical searches of these databases are available to the public. The CSPV also offers technical assistance and consultation for groups wishing to develop, implement or evaluate an adolescent violence-prevention program.

■ ■ ■

PAVNET Online
Partnerships Against Violence Network
(301) 504-5462
http://www.pavnet.org/

PAVNET Online is a "virtual library" of information about violence and youth-at-risk, representing data from seven different federal agencies. It provides a list of over 600 promising programs, links to information sources and technical assistance, and a list of funding sources. The information on PAVNET Online is also available in written or diskette format. For more information on these formats, call 1-800-851-3420.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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At-Risk Resources
135 Dupont St
PO Box 760
Plainview, NY 11803-0760
800-999-6884 (toll free); Fax: (516) 349-5521
http://www.at-risk.com

A catalogue of products for educators, counselors, parents and children is produced by The Bureau for At-Risk Youth. This catalogue focuses on violence-prevention and other adolescent and child health issues and features pamphlets, books, videos, software, posters and safe-school curricula.

■ ■ ■

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Justice Information Center
A Service of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)
PO Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
(800) 851-3420
Fax: (301) 519-550
http://www.ncjrs.org/

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency (OJJDP) is dedicated to a comprehensive approach to preventing youth violence and strengthening the juvenile justice system. The OJJDP can be accessed from The Justice Information Center website and provides information on upcoming conferences, funding opportunities, new publications and contact lists for state agencies and organizations. The OJJDP also publishes full-text links to Adolescent Violence Fact Sheets which the public is invited to copy and use. The OJJDP also publishes JUVJUST, an electronic newsletter. Also check out the OJJDP's National Youth Gang Center (www.iir.com/nygc or phone (904) 385-0600). Users can request documents by contacting the fax-on-demand service of the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse: (800) 638-8736 (toll-free).

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National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K St, NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
(202) 466-6272
FAX: (202) 296-1356
http://www.ncpc.org/

Home of McGruff the Crime Dog, the National Crime Prevention Council works to prevent many types of crime and build safer, stronger communities. The on-line resource center has general crime prevention resources, fun stuff for kids, and information about their two programs focused specifically on teens: Youth as Resources (YAR), and Teens, Crime and the Community (TCC).

■ ■ ■

Pacific Center for Violence Prevention
San Francisco General Hospital
Building 1, Room 300
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 821-8209; Fax: (415) 282-2563
http://www.pcvp.org

This is a multidisciplinary policy center which works to reduce youth violence in California through a public health approach. The Center strives to refocus public attention from incarceration to prevention, reduce the contribution of alcohol abuse to youth violence, and address root causes of violence such as injustice, racism, low income and despair. The Center maintains a library, lists of statistics and publications, and fact sheets with extensive citations.

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Violent Injury Prevention Center (VIPC)
Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago
2300 Children's Plaza #88
Chicago, IL 60614
(773) 880-3261
FAX: (773) 880-6615
http://www.childmmc.edu/cmhweb/cmhotherdepts/advocacy/VIPC/VIPChome.htm

The Center gathers data on child/adolescent death and injury and child abuse, providing it to policy-makers and researchers. The Center develops and distributes information and training materials and provides nationally-renowned speakers to assist health care workers in addressing violence as a public health issue. The Center also houses two special youth violence programs: The Handgun Epidemic Lowering Plan (HELP) , and KidSTART, a tertiary prevention program for pediatric victims of violence which addresses the psychological and social needs of children after they have experienced violence.

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UCLA School Mental Health Project
Center for Mental Health in Schools
UCLA Dept. of Psychology
405 Hilgard Av
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563
(310) 825-3634; Fax: (310) 206-8716
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu
E-mail: smhp@ucla.edu

The mission of the Center is to enhance the ability of schools and their surrounding communities to address mental health and psychosocial barriers to student learning and promote healthy development. The Center's Clearinghouse provides links to resources, materials and information about a variety of school health issues including drug abuse prevention and violence prevention in schools. The Clearinghouse maintains a catalogue of relevant publications.

■ ■ ■

The National Domestic Violence Hotline
800-799-SAFE or 800-787-3224 (TDD)

Operating 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week, the Hotline provides crisis intervention and information referrals to sources of assistance, shelters, social service agencies, legal programs and other helpful groups. Among the services offered are technology for the deaf, access to translators in 139 languages, and published materials in a variety of formats and languages.

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Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse
386 McNeal Hall
1985 Buford Av
St. Paul, MN 55108-6142
(612) 624-0721; Fax: (612) 625-4288
E-mail: mincava@umn.ecu
http://www.umn.edu/mincava

The Center supports education, research and information regarding issues of violence and abuse. The Center has four separate but related projects: (1) a violence education program to prepare college students and professionals to effectively respond to issues of violence; (2) a research study examining the link between child maltreatment and woman battering; (3) a national electronic network bringing resources to domestic violence coalitions; and (4) two electronic clearinghouse sites, one which deals specifically with violence against women **(http://www.vaw.umn.edu)** and one which deals with all types of violence, including adolescent violence **(http://www.umn.edu/mincava)**.

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American Psychological Association
750 First St NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 336-5500
http://www.apa.org

The APA website has a search engine as well as printable brochures on a wide variety of topics including risk factors for youth violence and parental prevention strategies for youth violence. The APA maintains a public policy office and a Center for Psychology in Schools and Education which works to provide a sound psychosocial grounding for adolescent programs such as drug and violence preventions.

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Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center
http://www.csnp.ohio-state.edu/glarrc.htm

GLARRC works with midwestern states to provide quality education and other services to youth with disabilities and their families. The Center also maintains an Early Prevention of Violence Database which stores information on reducing violence focusing on prevention from birth to age 6. This database has information on topics such as fostering good parental skills, discouraging drug and alcohol use by parents and children, encouraging the teaching of conflict resolution and working toward the reduction of media violence.

■ ■ ■

Executive Office for Weed and Seed
United States Department of Justice
Office of Justice Program
810 7th St NW, 6th Floor
Washington DC 20531
(206) 616-1152; Fax: (202) 616-1159
FAX (202) 616-1159
E-mail: askeows@ojp.usdoj.gov
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows

Operation Weed and Seed is a multi-agency strategy that "weeds out" violent crime, gang activity and drug trafficking in targeted neighborhoods and then "seeds" the area by restoring these neighborhoods through social and economic revitalization. This strategy links and integrates federal, state, and local law enforcement and criminal justice efforts with social services and private sector and community efforts. The Weed and Seed home page provides links to technical assistance, important news and events etc.

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Violence Policy Center
1350 Connecticut Av NW, Ste 825
Washington DC 20036
E-mail: comment@vpc.org
http://www.vpc.org

The VPC is a national educational foundation working to reduce firearm violence (including criminal attack, suicide and unintentional injuries). The Center provides a variety of information including facts on Youth and Firearms Violence, Federal and State Policy Issues, Firearm Manufacturers and Product Liability Approaches.

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Texas Youth Commission
Office of Prevention
4900 North Lamar Blvd
Austin, TX 78751
(512) 424-6199
FAX (512) 424-6300
http://www.tyc.state.tx.us/prevention

The Prevention Yellow Pages is an on-line resource which is a product of the Texas Youth Commission's Office of Prevention, a part of whose mission is to study juvenile delinquency. This resource offers over 1,000 links to journal articles, research reports, websites, government documents, dissertations and many full-text documents on youth problems. A five star ranking system is employed to highlight effective prevention programs.

■ ■ ■

National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
808 17th St. NW, Ste. 410
Washington, DC 20006-1512
(202) 293-0090
FAX: (202) 293-1250
http://www.nasadad.org/

NASADAD, along with its affiliate the National Prevention Network (NPN), strives to support and enhance national, state and local alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse prevention efforts that will reduce the incidence and prevalence of such abuse, ultimately enhancing the overall health of communities nationwide.

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Center for the Prevention of School Violence
20 Enterprise St, Ste 2
Raleigh, NC 27607-7375
1-800-299-6054 or (919) 515-9397
FAX: (919) 515-9561
http://www.ncsu.edu/cpsv/

The Center is organized into three areas: information, programs and research. The Center has a Clearinghouse for information about school violence. It houses a resource library which contains a great deal of original Center-generated information, including information on how school design and technology (e.g. metal detectors and Breathalyzers) influence school safety. The programs area develops programs such as Students Against Violence Everywhere (S.A.V.E.) and Teen/Student Court. It also provides technical assistance to interested schools and communities. Research at the Center strives to generate practical, useful research which recognizes the uniqueness of each school and its problems.

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National School Safety Center
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd, Ste 290
Westlake Village, CA 91362-3815
(805) 373-9977; Fax: (805) 373-9277
E-mail: june@nssci.org

NSSC works with local school districts and communities to develop customized safe school programs. NSSC also serves as a Clearinghouse for current information on school safety issues, maintaining a resource center with more than 50,000 articles, publications and films. The Center also publishes The School Safety News Service and the newsletters School Safety and School Safety Update.

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Violence Prevention Resources
National Citizens Crime Prevention Campaign
267 Lester Av, Ste 104
Oakland, CA 94606
800-WE-PREVENT
http://www.child.net/violence.htm
E-mail: youthkids@aol.com

This site, maintained through Streetcats Foundation and The National Children's Coalition, provides a list of resources for such topics as juvenile justice, gang violence, television violence, domestic violence and gun control.

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Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel St
Newton, MA 02158
(617) 969-7100, Ext 2453; (800) 225-4276; Fax: (617) 244-3436
E-mail: rons@edc.org
http://www.edc.org

This center boasts six violence prevention programs including Children's Safety Network: Adolescent Violence Prevention Resource Center. This center strengthens the capacity of federal, state, and local maternal and child health agencies to develop, implement, and evaluate violence prevention programs in schools and communities. Products include the books: Taking Action to Prevent Adolescent Violence and Youth Violence: Locating and Using the Data; the Options newsletter; and a forthcoming needs assessment report on state health departments.

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National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
Division of Violence Prevention
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
4770 Buford Hwy, MS K60
Atlanta. GA 30341-3724
(770) 488-4646 Fax: (770) 488-4349
http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp
E-mail: BVPINFO@cdc.gov

The Division of Violence Prevention (DVP), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has a special focus on preventing violence among young people. The rationale for this emphasis is the impact of injuries on youth. DVP focuses on intervention and evaluation research. Several of DVPs projects examine risk factors for youth violence, and others are evaluating the impact of prevention intervention in schools and communities. DVP also tracks and studies the increase of suicide among youth people.

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